

## NOTES ON BIRDS OF THE MONTERREY DISTRICT OF NUEVO LEON, MEXICO

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THE Cornell University-Carleton College Expedition visited the Monterrey district of Nuevo Leon on February 25-27 and May 5-9, 1941. In February we worked the flat country north of the city (at about 1,500 feet elevation). In May, activities centered on the Mesa de Chipinque (elevation about 5,000 feet), though a brief trip to the village of Santa Rosa, 12 miles northeast of Monterrey, was made on May 9. The following list includes all species actually collected about Monterrey, as well as two taken near Canoas, a village just north of Montemorelos.

We are grateful to John W. Aldrich for his courtesy in lending series of *Atlapetes pileatus* (including the type of *A. p. dilutus*) and *Toxostoma longirostre*; to Josselyn Van Tyne, for lending a series of *Caprimulgus vociferus arizonae* and for comparing three *Pipilo maculatus* specimens with the type of *P. m. gaigei*; and to Lloyd Hulbert, a graduate student at Cornell University, for his excellent photograph of the series of *Accipiter striatus*.

*Elanus leucurus* (Vieillot). White-tailed Kite. A single bird was seen several times flying over the flat country north of Monterrey, February 26 and 27.

*Accipiter striatus suttoni* van Rossem. Mexican Sharp-shinned Hawk. A breeding male and female, taken at the Mesa de Chipinque May 5-6, exhibit clearly the faintly barred underparts and solidly brown flags of this race. In both specimens the eyes were dark reddish-brown. The female had a well defined brood-patch. The accompanying photograph shows the type and three topotypes of *suttoni*, with an average male and female *velox* from the eastern United States.

*Otus asio* (Linnaeus). Screech Owl. Three Screech Owls were taken: two females, in Anahuac Park, two miles north of Monterrey, February 25 and 26; and a male at the Mesa de Chipinque, May 5.

Cornell University now has three topotypical *O. a. semplei*. The type (at Carnegie Museum) is a gray-phase bird like two of these topotypes, but the race is definitely dichromatic, a male taken by Mr. Semple on March 18, 1939 (see Sutton and Burleigh, 1941: 159) being a very red bird with the usual distinctive feather-patterns of that color-phase. The 1941 male measures: wing, 159; tail, 79.

The two above-mentioned Monterrey females are puzzlingly intermediate in color-phase. Both are strongly reddish throughout, but the feather-patterning is that of gray-phase birds. They measure: wing, 158, 160; tail, 81, 79. Strictly comparable material must be obtained before we can be sure what Screech Owl occurs at Monterrey. Sutton has long believed *semplei* to be a montane race, and *mccallii* to be the Monterrey bird, but this concept may be wrong.

*Bubo virginianus pallescens* Stone. Western Horned Owl. A faded female taken in Anahuac Park, 2 miles north of Monterrey, February 26, has buffy white, immaculate toes and lower tarsi. Its small size (wing, 344 mm.) indicates some approach to *mayensis* (see Griscom, 1935: 547). A very small male Horned Owl (wing, 315) taken near Linares, 80 miles south of Monterrey, has been identified as *mayensis* (Sutton and Burleigh, 1941: 159).

*Caprimulgus vociferus setosus* van Rossem. Mexican Whip-poor-will. Four breeding specimens (3 males, 1 female) were taken at the Mesa de Chipinque, May 5. In identifying these birds, three *C. v. setosus* (a male topotype, from Galindo, Tamaulipas; a female from Realito, Tamaulipas; and a breeding male from Las Vigas, Veracruz), and a series of *C. v. arizonae* (four virtual topotypes and ten birds from the Chisos Mountains, Brewster County, Texas) were used for comparison. In darkness and dullness throughout, our Mesa de Chipinque birds agree with the three *setosus*, thus extending the known range of this form eastward from "southern Coahuila" (Oberholser, 1914: 12, footnote) and northward from central Tamaulipas (Peters, 1940: 199) to include mountainous parts of western Nuevo Leon. The Chisos Mountains birds vary considerably and as a lot appear to be intermediate between *arizonae* and *setosus*, the females tending to look like the former, some of the males like the latter.

The detailed diagnosis of the Mexican Whip-poor-will (at that time known as *macromystax*) in Brewster's original description of *C. v. arizonae* caused us considerable confusion until we examined a specimen of *Caprimulgus serico-caudatus salvini* to find that, point for point, the bird Brewster believed to be the Mexican Whip-poor-will and was using for comparison was in fact this superficially similar but actually quite distinct species.

*Chloronerpes aeruginosus* (Malherbe). Mexican Green Woodpecker. Seen repeatedly on the Mesa de Chipinque. Two occupied nests found (at about 5,000 feet and 5,500 feet) and a male with much enlarged testes and well-defined brood-patch taken on May 7.

*Nuttallornis borealis* (Swainson). Olive-sided Flycatcher. Noted but once, May 7, when a female was taken at about 6,000 feet on the Mesa de Chipinque.

*Empidonax difficilis* Baird. Western Flycatcher. Male, with much enlarged testes, taken May 8 at about 7,000 feet on the Mesa de Chipinque. The Western Flycatcher of the Mesa has been identified as *E. d. hellmayri* (Sutton and Burleigh, 1941: 159). But after comparing the four available specimens with seasonally comparable, topotypical *hellmayri*, we are convinced that they are brighter throughout than that form, greener above, yellower on the belly, more brownish olive on the chest—and that they represent one of the links in the chain of races (*immemoratus*, *occidentalis*, *salvini*, *dwrighti*, etc.) connecting the dull *hellmayri* with the bright *flavescens* of Costa Rica. We consider it inadvisable, however, to bestow a separate name on them at this writing, since they probably are very close to one of the above-named races. They measure: wing, 70.5, 71.5, 70, 72 mm.; tail, 62.5, 63, 60, 64 (average, wing, 71, tail, 62.3).

*Troglodytes brunneicollis cahooni* Brewster. Cahoon's Brown-throated Wren. Noted infrequently on the Mesa de Chipinque at from 5,500 to 7,000 feet. Nest with half-grown young found in hole in cliff along trail leading to top of mountain (at about 6,000 feet), May 8.

*Thryothorus ludovicianus berlandieri* Baird. Berlandier's Wren. Noted repeatedly at Monterrey and on the Mesa de Chipinque. Female taken along the main highway near the village of Canoas, just north of Montemorelos, February 27.

*Toxostoma longirostre sennetti* (Ridgway). Sennett's Long-billed Thrasher. We have compared a male specimen taken two miles north of Monterrey, February 26, with a series of nine January and February *T. l. longirostre* from Puebla, Veracruz, San Luis Potosi, and the State of Mexico. Our specimen is noticeably grayer above than any of these though not strikingly whiter below. Its measurements (wing, 96; tail, 126.5; exposed culmen, 27) indicate *sennetti*.

*Vireo griseus griseus* (Boddaert). Northern White-eyed Vireo. Male (wing, 61 mm.; tail, 53.1) taken 2 miles north of Monterrey, February 26. Though the testes of this bird were noticeably enlarged (3 x 4 mm.) we did not hear it singing, so it probably was a transient on its way northward. The breeding race of the Monterrey district is said to be *V. g. micrus* (see Hellmayr, 1935: 114).

*Polioptila caerulea amoenissima* Grinnell. Western Blue-Grey Gnatcatcher. Gnatcatchers were seen repeatedly in the brush country north of Monterrey. The only specimen taken (female?, February 26) has the grayish throat and breast and dark upper parts that characterize this race. The wing measures 50 mm., the tail, 55.

*Vermivora celata celata* (Say). Eastern Orange-crowned Warbler. Noted several times at Anahuac Park, north of Monterrey, where a female (molting on throat) was taken February 26.

*Richmondia cardinalis canicauda* (Chapman). Gray-tailed Cardinal. A male (wing, 89 mm., tail, 97) taken 2 miles north of Monterrey, February 27, is a bright, well plumaged example of this race. The testes were only slightly enlarged.

*Cyanocompsa parellina* (Bonaparte). Blue Bunting. Two females, taken along the main highway near Canoas, February 27, are obviously smaller-billed and paler than *C. p. parellina* from central Veracruz, but whether they are *C. p. beneplacita* or *C. p. lucida* we cannot say, for we have thus far been unable to find any character by which females of these two races can be distinguished.

*Passerina versicolor versicolor* (Bonaparte). Varied Bunting. Recorded with certainty but once, when an adult male was taken 9 miles north of Monterrey along the road to Santa Rosa, May 9.

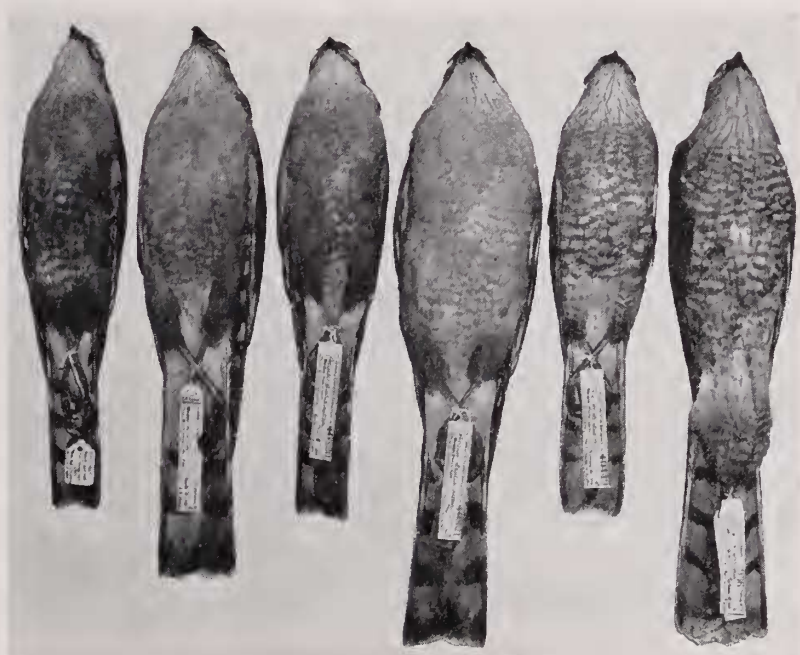


Figure 1. Adult Sharp-shinned Hawks. The four at the left are *Accipiter striatus suttoni* (type at extreme left) from the Mesa de Chipinque, Nuevo Leon. The two at the right are average *A. s. velox*. The females are instantly distinguishable because of their large size.

*Atlapetes pileatus dilutus* Ridgway. Chihuahua Rufous-capped Sparrow. Several specimens of this finch were taken by the first Semple Expedition at the Mesa

de Chipinque February 9-14, 1938. On comparison with the type of *A. p. dilutus*, these were thought to be too yellow below and not gray enough above for that race, hence were reported as *A. p. pileatus* (Sutton and Burleigh, 1939: 45). The following year, on April 8, two more specimens were obtained near Jacala, Hidalgo. These were much yellower below than the Mesa birds, in spite of the fact that they had been subjected to several weeks more wear and exposure.

Interested in determining to what extent color of underparts might vary seasonally, Sutton collected a breeding pair of Mesa birds on May 7, 1941. These proved to be very pale below, much paler than the palest February specimen taken in 1938. Were these pale birds *dilutus*?

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service courteously lent us their entire series of 15 *Atlapetes pileatus*, including the type of *dilutus*. Examining these, together with the seven adult Nuevo Leon and Hidalgo specimens at present in the Cornell collection, we find (1) that Nuevo Leon birds and the type of *dilutus* are definitely the palest and dullest below of the lot; (2) that by far the most richly colored individual of the whole series is a female taken February 10, 1893, at Tetela del Volcan, Morelos; and (3) that birds from more southerly latitudes of Mexico (Veracruz, Jalisco, Puebla, Guerrero, and Michoacan) all tend to be bright yellow below and brown-backed in comparison with the Mesa de Chipinque series, the one Hidalgo bird referred to above being about halfway between the very pale and very bright extremes.

Our study convinces us that the type of *A. p. dilutus* (April) was a faded bird. Collected in 1884, it probably has faded still more with the passing of the years. We nevertheless believe *dilutus* to be valid, and offer the pale-bellied, though freshly plumaged, Mesa de Chipinque birds as evidence. The six specimens measure: males, wing, 61-67 mm. (av. 64.5); tail 63-70 mm. (av. 67); females, wing, 59.5, 60.5; tail 59, 61.

Two young birds just out of the nest were also collected at the Mesa on May 7, 1941. These are obscurely colored—dull brown above; somewhat yellow on the throat; light buffy, washed with yellow, on the belly.

*Arremonops rufivirgatus rufivirgatus* (Lawrence). Texas Sparrow. Noted repeatedly about Monterrey and on the Mesa. A female taken in Anahuac Park, north of Monterrey, February 26, is darker chested than topotypical specimens from Brownsville, Texas, in this respect showing some approach to *A. r. ridgwayi*. A juvenal female (tail, 40 mm.) taken on the Mesa, May 6, was being fed by its parents.

*Pipilo maculatus gaigei* Van Tyne and Sutton. Gaige's Spotted Towhee. Three breeding males taken at the Mesa de Chipinque, May 8, have been directly compared with the type of *gaigei* and are considered by Van Tyne to belong to that race. Two of these birds appear to be in their first breeding plumage.

*Aimophila cassinii* (Woodhouse). Cassin's Sparrow. Fairly common in plains country north of Monterrey, where a female was taken February 27.

*Aimophila ruficeps boucardi* (Sclater). Boucard's Sparrow. A breeding male (testes 5 x 7 mm.) collected May 8 in a dry gully below the Mesa de Chipinque (at about 4,000 feet), has the dark crown-patch and measurements (wing 62 mm.; tail, 65.5) of this race. That Nuevo Leon is not included by Hellmayr (1938: 530) in the range of *boucardi* is probably merely an oversight.

*Amphispiza bilineata bilineata* (Cassin). Black-throated Sparrow. Noted repeatedly in opener country north of Monterrey. On May 9 an adult male and two stub-tailed juvenals were collected. The smallness of the male (wing, 62.5 mm.; tail, 58.) and reduced white patch on the outermost rectrix (about 13 mm. long) indicate that this race, rather than *grisea*, is the breeding form of the region.

*Spizella pallida* (Swainson). Clay-colored Sparrow. Noted repeatedly in opener country about Monterrey in February, but not in May. Female taken February 26.

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